

VZCZCXYZ0000
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHLM #0035 0120229
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 120229Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9153
INFO RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 4643
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 2512
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 4602
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 3708
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI 8873
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 3098
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0876

UNCLAS COLOMBO 000035

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [UK](#) [IN](#) [JA](#) [CE](#)

SUBJECT: U.K., India and Japan Call for Political Solution

¶1. The recent capture of Kilinochchi, the former capital of the LTTE in northern Sri Lanka, to the Sri Lankan Armed Forces elicited similarly cautious responses from the British Foreign Office, the Indian Foreign Secretary, and an unnamed Japanese foreign ministry official.

UK Calls for Sustainable Peace

¶2. Secretary of State for International Development Douglas Alexander and Minister of State Lord Malloch-Brown of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office issued the following statement on the situation in Sri Lanka:

¶3. "We continue to monitor developments in Sri Lanka closely, including on 2 January the capture of Kilinochchi, the former administrative capital of the LTTE in the north of the country, by the Sri Lankan Armed Forces. This development makes it even more urgent that all parties achieve progress on setting out a political solution that addresses the legitimate concerns of all communities. This is the only way to achieve a strong and sustainable peace in Sri Lanka in which all communities can prosper.

¶4. "We remain concerned about the humanitarian impact of the conflict and call on all parties to abide by their obligations under International Humanitarian Law, in particular the need to ensure the safety of civilians, to allow their free movement in the Vanni and to enhance access for humanitarian agencies to facilitate the delivery of adequate supplies of humanitarian aid."

No Military Solution

¶5. (U) India Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon outlined India's position on the situation in Sri Lanka at a recent press conference.

¶6. "Our position is quite clear that there are several aspects to the Sri Lankan problem, and that no one of them is sufficient to solve the problem. There is no military solution to this problem, for instance, no matter how the military situation might fluctuate," said Menon. "There is a political aspect which needs work because until there is a political understanding within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, within which all the communities in Sri Lanka are comfortable, you cannot speak of a political solution of the situation in Sri Lanka."

¶7. Mr. Menon echoed the British High Commission's concern about the humanitarian crises caused by the military conflict and absence of a political solution. "We have been working in the last several months as the fighting is intensified, to try and get relief to supplies and to try and get help to the civilian population who is caught up in this conflict. That we will continue to do. And we will continue to work with all those who are willing to do so, to try and help those poor civilians who are trapped in this zone of conflict," said Menon.

¶8. Menon concluded by mentioning that his views on Velupillai Prabhakaran, leader of the LTTE, are well known. "I think we have

consistently sought his extradition to face charges here, to face trial here actually. And that continues. That is a request we have renewed repeatedly."

Japan Encourages a Political Solution

¶9. A Japanese foreign ministry official in charge of Sri Lankan matters, on condition of anonymity, spoke to AFP News Agency about the need for a political solution to the conflict in Sri Lanka.

¶10. "The real solution to the ethnic conflict can be realized only through political efforts," said the anonymous ministry official. "Japan will keep encouraging the Sri Lankan government to pursue a political solution to the ethnic conflict by promoting local autonomy in the northeast region... Capturing the de facto capital of the rebels holds symbolic meaning but its military significance is limited," he said. "The conflict is expected to continue in the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka."

BLAKE